Children falling ill due to mid-day meal

2187. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there were reports of several children dying and a large number of falling ill after eating rotten food at schools in Meerut, Kanpur and Unnao under mid-day meal scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken to provide safe and hygienic foods to schools under mid-day meal scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) As per information received from Government of Uttar Pradesh, reports about children having died at Meerut, Kanpur and Unnao after consuming mid-day meal at schools are not true. A few children took ill at Unnao allegedly because of contaminated pulse. An FIR has been lodged against the shopkeeper and the cook. In addition, the U.P. Government has taken the following steps:-

(i) It has initiated steps to put in place a mechanism to ensure hygienic, wholesome food.

(ii) It has directed district officers to implement the instructions regarding mid-day meal in letter and spirit.

(iii) The Minister of Basic Education, Government of Uttar Pradesh has appealed to the Gram Pradhans to maintain cleanliness and provide good food at schools.

Central Government has also exhorted all States to mobilize mothers to take turns to oversee preparation of meal to ensure regularity and quality.

Portrayal of Gandhi in textbooks

2188. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, is not being portrayed properly in some of the textbooks for schools;

(b) if so, the measures being taken to correct the images; and

(c) whether any study of textbooks used in various schools, Government as well as private schools, is being undertaken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The textbooks prepared by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and used in schools affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) portray Mahatma Gandhi properly.

(c) A Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) Committee on "Regulatory Mechanism for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks taught in schools outside the Government System" has examined some of the textbooks used in government and private schools.

Selection of children under SSA

2189. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any criteria has been fixed for selection of children for special needs under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds allocated for this programme especially to Bihar and Maharashtra;

(d) the States where this programme is not initiated successfully; and

(e) the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan guidelines specify that every child with special needs in the 6-14 years age group, irrespective of the degree, kind or category of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment.

(c) The budget for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2005-06 is Rs.7156.00 crores. Allocation under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for Bihar and Maharashtra in 2005-06 is Rs. 900.02 crores and Rs. 882.16 crores respectively.